

City of Norman
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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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ROBINSON STREET UNDERPASS PROJECT

On Wednesday, September 16, 2009, Burlington, Northern and Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad Company officials notified the City of Norman that their design objections to the Robinson Street underpass project have been withdrawn. It appears that this decision by BNSF will allow the Robinson Street Underpass Project to proceed on schedule and on budget. A bid letting for the \$25 million project will be conducted in January 2010 and construction of the underpass will begin in March 2010 as planned. Between now and January 2010, existing utilities will be relocated and other obstructions will be removed within the project boundaries.

“We are pleased with the decisions of BNSF and we appreciate their reconsideration of their most recent position on this matter,” said Mayor Rosenthal. “This is great news for Norman and it emphasizes the effectiveness of the working partnership between the City and BNSF.”

BNSF has informed the City that their company is committed to working with the City and their consulting engineers, HNTB, to expedite final plans and contract negotiations on the project.

Since June 2009, the City of Norman has been negotiating with BNSF regarding design issues on the Robinson Street Underpass Project. Those issues revolved around the proposed operating speed of trains on the temporary railroad shoofly during construction of the underpass and the construction of a second main line BNSF track crossing bridge over Robinson Street. The City Council received a briefing of the proposed

project alternatives in a study session on Tuesday, September 8, 2009. At that time, it appeared that the Robinson Street Underpass Project might encounter a three-month delay and increased costs of \$1.4 million to address the BNSF concerns.

Shawn O'Leary, Director of Public Works said "This change of position by BNSF will not have any adverse impacts on the future development of high speed or commuter rail through Norman. In fact, the Robinson Street Underpass Project, as currently designed, includes space and construction of the bridge abutments for a future second main line BNSF railroad track crossing over Robinson Street."

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